

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the nearly four and a half million U.S. citizens and nationals residing in the five U.S. territories, we write to convey our profound gratitude to you for proposing—in the document entitled “Expanding Health Care Coverage: Proposals to Provide Affordable Coverage to All Americans”—policy options that would provide fair and equal treatment for our constituents under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

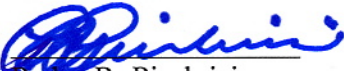
This document reflects the Committee’s recognition that residents of the territories are currently subject to severe disparities under the federal and federal-state programs that will serve as the building blocks for national health care reform. As a result of these disparities, too many patients receive inadequate care, too many providers are not adequately compensated for their services, and too much of the financial burden associated with health care delivery must be shouldered by the territorial governments.

The document appears to reflect the Committee’s belief that these inequities cannot be justified on moral or policy grounds, and that they cannot be allowed to stand if we are to accomplish the worthy goal of providing affordable health care coverage to all Americans, whatever their financial means and wherever they reside. Particularly because the interests of our constituents have at times been relegated to an afterthought in the past, we are deeply heartened that the Committee has made treatment of the territories an integral part of the debate over health care reform.

The territories are eager to participate fully—to share in both the benefits and the burdens—in the national health care system that Congress crafts this year. But, as the Committee has clearly recognized, we will be unable to do so unless Congress provides for full parity for the territories under Medicaid and CHIP, as well as under Medicare. We know that this process is in its beginning stages, that much remains to be done in order to transform the Committee’s policy proposals into legislative language, and that many challenges lie ahead. Daunting as the task

may appear, we are united in the conviction that this is a fight worth making. We commend you for your leadership and reiterate our unwavering support for your efforts.

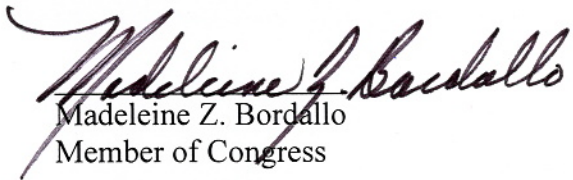
Sincerely,



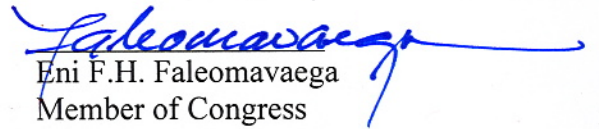
Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress



Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources